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Summary record of the 21st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 12 October 2000, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Gittens-Joseph ..... (Trinidad and Tobago)

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00-68553 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 105: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) (A/C.3/55/L.3, L.4, L.5, L.7 and L.9)

Draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.3: Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice: Meeting the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century

1. **The Chairperson** informed the Committee that the draft resolution contained no programme-budget implications.

2. *Draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.3 was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.4: Follow-up to the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders

3. **The Chairperson** informed the Committee that the draft resolution contained no programme-budget implications.

4. *Draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.4 was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.5: An effective international legal instrument against corruption

5. **The Chairperson** informed the Committee that the draft resolution contained no programme-budget implications.

6. *Draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.5 was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.7: United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders

7. **The Chairperson** informed the Committee that the draft resolution contained no programme-budget implications.

8. *Draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.7 was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.9: Strengthening of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity

9. **The Chairperson** informed the Committee that the draft resolution contained no programme-budget implications.

10. **Ms. Borzi Cornacchia** (Italy), speaking on behalf of the sponsors, informed the Committee that, in paragraph 3 of the draft resolution, the words "of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention of the Secretariat" should be deleted. Australia, Croatia, Ecuador, Madagascar, Malawi and the Philippines joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

11. *Draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.9, as orally revised, was adopted.*

Agenda item 106: International drug control (*continued*) (A/C.3/55/L.10)

Draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.10: International cooperation against the world drug problem

12. **The Chairperson** informed the Committee that the draft resolution contained no programme-budget implications.

13. **Mr. Campuzano** (Mexico), speaking on behalf of the sponsors, said that Bulgaria, the Congo, Eritrea, Kenya, New Zealand, Saint Lucia, Sri Lanka, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

14. *Draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.10 was adopted.*

Agenda item 110: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*) (A/55/41, A/55/162-S/2000/715, A/55/163-S/2000/712, A/55/201, A/55/297, A/55/442, A/55/467-S/2000/973)

15. **Mr. Mun** Jong Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said the adoption of the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children at the World Summit for Children in 1990 had been a milestone in international activities for the protection and promotion of the rights of children. Progress had been made in implementing the goals of the World Summit; most Member States had ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and taken steps to eliminate all forms of exploitation of children. He welcomed in particular Security Council resolution 1314 (2000) on children and armed conflict, the adoption by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1999 of Convention 182 concerning the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, as well as the optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child related to the involvement of children in armed conflict and the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

16. Nevertheless. almost 130 million school-age children were illiterate, one million children suffered from HIV/AIDS and several million were still employed as child labourers. The special session of the General Assembly in 2001 for follow-up to the World Summit for Children should review implementation of the goals set by the World Summit and put forward strategies to protect children. A number of areas required special attention. Every country should provide social policies which protected children and contributed to their development, infant-mortality rates must be lowered, health care and education must be improved, children should be provided with a sound and safe social environment and family violence should be eliminated in order to encourage the social integration of children.

17. International norms for the protection of the rights of the child should be strictly observed, and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child should be accelerated; any remaining countries which had not yet acceded to the Convention should be urged to do so. International cooperation for the protection and promotion of the rights of the child should be further strengthened and national, regional and international cooperation should be reinforced with a view to punishing child exploitation and increasing children's access to education and health care and eradicating child poverty.

18. A nation's future depended on its children and his Government had made the interests of children a priority. Legal mechanisms such as laws on the raising and education of children and the family provided for the protection and care of children; children received 11 years' compulsory free education and also free medical care. In that spirit he reaffirmed his delegation's continued commitment to participating in international efforts to protect the interests of children.

19. **Ms. Martinez** (Ecuador) associated herself with the statement made by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Rio Group. She stressed that poverty was a severe impediment to full enjoyment of human rights, especially for children during their formative years, severely affecting their ability to contribute productively to society. Child poverty often led to child labour, the factor which most severely limited a child's future. For that reason, her Government was committed to the elimination of child labour and was gradually raising the minimum working age for children; it had ratified ILO Convention 138 concerning minimum working age as well as Convention 182 concerning the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. Draft legislation to protect young children and adolescents was also currently before the National Congress.

20. Her delegation supported the holding of the special session of the General Assembly for follow-up to the World Summit for Children and, at the domestic level, the Government, non-government organizations and civil society were participating in preparations with a view to making proposals to the preparatory committee. Her delegation, through the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) secretariat had already submitted to that Committee a report on Ecuador's social indicators, which included contributions from non-governmental organizations working the areas of children's rights. In that context, she expressed thanks for the efforts of UNICEF and expressed confidence that that organization would contribute greatly to the success of the special session. Her delegation would participate in the second substantive session of the Preparatory Committee, to be held in January 2001, and she looked forward to studying the first draft of the relevant document to be provided to Member States in November .

21. She expressed dismay at the millions of child refugees and displaced persons forced to flee torture and death. She reiterated her support for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the impact of armed conflict on children, whose task was to be the conscience of the world and speak for children afflicted by conflict and to propose concrete measures to protect them. The international community and the United Nations must implement measures to fulfil the objectives set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In that context, she noted that the President of Ecuador, during the Millennium Summit, had signed the optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child related to the involvement of children in armed conflict and the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. With regard to the latter, her delegation would continue to support the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and stressed the need to redouble efforts to eliminate family violence and at all times respect the rights and meet the needs of all children.

22. **Ms. Afifi** (Morocco) said that since the 1990 World Summit for Children there had been progress as well as failures, the latter due in large part to poverty,

continuing discrimination, violence, conflict, natural catastrophe and HIV/AIDS. The gap between rich and poor continued to grow, hundreds of millions of children lived on less than one dollar per day, worked in deplorable conditions, lacked access to clean drinking water or sanitation and 130 million children, 60 per cent of them girls, had no access to education. In addition, 13 million children would soon have lost at least one parent because of AIDS, especially in the developing countries, where 90 per cent of AIDS cases were to be found.

23. Nevertheless, there was a growing awareness among the international community, States, civil society and non-governmental organizations of the need to protect children's rights. Some highlights of recent efforts to protect children were: implementation of and follow-up to the objectives of the World Summit; near universal ratification of or accession to the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the adoption of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court; Conventions 138 and 182, the two optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; and increased attention to children's issues during peacekeeping operations.

24. Her Government, in keeping with Morocco's ancestral, religious and traditional values, took a particular interest in the rights of the child and had adopted a National Action Plan aimed at the survival, protection and development of children by reducing the death rate of children under five years of age and achieving near universal vaccination for six target diseases. The progress made had been a result of the joint efforts of civil society, non-governmental organizations and the Government. The latter had created a ministry responsible for human rights, a national children's rights observatory and a ministry responsible for social protection, the family and childhood; legislation on the family and children had been harmonized with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other legal instruments. International cooperation on follow-up to the World Summit had continued in particular with UNICEF in the areas of health, basic services in rural areas, education, children in difficult circumstances, planning, social mobilization and advocacy.

25. Human rights had been incorporated into school programmes and every year on National Children's Day, a children's parliament was organized. Action plans had also been developed to promote literacy, eliminate child labour and reintegrate street children into society. Children's centres offering legal and psychological assistance to children in need were also being established.

26. She hoped that the special session of the General Assembly for follow-up to the World Summit for Children would establish a new international agenda to meet the expectations and needs of generations to come. To that end, the international community must create a favourable environment in which adults undertook to respect children's rights, gender equality, the peaceful resolution of conflicts and progressive macroeconomic policies which promoted equitable growth. A new vision and approach would guarantee children a decent life and the opportunity to develop into the productive citizens of tomorrow.

27. **Mr. Ingolfsson** (Iceland) welcomed the attention accorded by heads of State and Governments in the Millennium Summit Declaration to the human rights of children, in particular their reference to the two optional protocols and to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, as well as their commitment to tackle poverty within a specific time-frame and to improve children's access to education. The optional protocols both enjoyed wide support; Iceland was one of the many States to have become a signatory to both protocols during the Summit. With regard to the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, it was disappointing that the international community had not been willing to further raise the minimum age for voluntary military recruitment. His delegation wished to encourage Member States to adopt a minimum recruitment age of at least 18 years in their domestic legislation.

28. Given the state of the world's children, there was a need for increased monitoring to ensure compliance at the national level with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, not only through practical measures, but also through legislation and law enforcement. It was also important to ensure that the optional protocols did not divert attention from the Convention itself, which continued to constitute the main legal foundation for the rights of the child. Millions of children were deprived of one or both parents by HIV/AIDS, resulting in unforeseen economic and social consequences. The impact of the pandemic on children should thus feature high on the agenda of the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly

on children. It was also vital to secure the protection of children in complex emergencies, whether of natural or man-made causes.

29. The promotion and protection of children depended, furthermore, on the fight against the growing narcotic drug problem, which required vigorous preventive and rehabilitative measures. Drugs only facilitated human-rights abuses against children: child soldiers were often made into drug addicts to enable them to commit horrendous atrocities, and child prostitutes were often drugged to break down their resistance. Drugs, alcohol and violence at home were also often the reason why children took to the streets. The commitment by world leaders to redouble their efforts to counter the scourge was to be welcomed. The important role and responsibility of civil society and the private sector in the field of children's rights should also not be underestimated, especially in respect of such issues as child labour.

30. **Ms. Ali** (Ethiopia) said that the future of developed and developing countries alike depended on due attention being accorded to the welfare of children. The primary challenge confronting the African continent was the eradication of malnutrition, disease, illiteracy, child labour and armed conflicts, all of which undermined development efforts and social cohesion. In that context, her Government attached great importance to the adoption of the two optional protocols.

31. In compliance with its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Government had established machinery to monitor implementation of the instrument, and had organized its distribution in local languages. Other concrete measures had also been undertaken. A child-abuse awareness campaign was being carried out with the cooperation of non-governmental organizations and training on the protection of the rights of children was being provided to police recruits. At the government policy level, special attention was accorded to the health needs of the family, particularly women and children. A long-term health-sector development programme gave priority to: reproductive health care, child-immunization coverage, the treatment of basic communicable diseases and the control of epidemic and sexually transmitted diseases. Increased health coverage had resulted in a decline in the infant and maternal mortality rates. New education policy made primary education (provided in local languages) free of charge, and programmes were under way to raise school-enrolment rates and to decrease the drop-out rate for children, especially girls. Cases of juvenile delinquency were now treated in special courts, and police were given special training on the treatment of juvenile offenders. A national forum had also been established to tackle the issue of child labour, and studies had been carried out to address the plight of children in difficult circumstances. Harmful traditional and customary practices affecting the health of children were also being studied. The Government planned to redouble its efforts to bring about significant change in the lives of children by means of studies, awareness-raising campaigns and institutional capacity-building. International assistance to that end would be most welcome.

32. **Mrs. Nguyen Thanh Ha** (Viet Nam) said that the quasi-universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child provided a very strong normative foundation. Despite the national and international momentum in favour of children, her delegation was most disturbed by the persisting, and even increasing levels of child deprivation and abuse against children in many parts of the world. Poverty, HIV/AIDS, discrimination and armed conflicts represented some of the formidable challenges affecting children and their families, and hampering the realization of their rights. Indeed, further efforts and initiatives were required.

33. In the context of globalization and in the interests of the future welfare of the nation, her Government was determined to continue its efforts towards socio-economic development and political stability, with children being accorded high priority. Viet Nam had been among the first countries in Asia to become party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. At the Millennium Summit, it had also become a signatory to the two optional protocols. With the assistance of UNICEF and other organizations and countries, Viet Nam had successfully implemented several national programmes of action for children. A new programme of action had been finalized for the period 2001 to 2005, including a number of priority programmes and projects for poverty reduction in selected rural areas and several major sectoral programmes to address the most serious impediments to the enjoyment of the rights of children and women. Particular attention was being accorded to the fight against social evils with harmful effects on children, such as sexual abuse and exploitation, drug abuse and cross-border trafficking in

children. The Government was making concerted efforts to strengthen legislative and punitive measures aimed at traffickers and intermediaries, to mobilize public support and to provide assistance to victims. It was also seeking to join regional efforts in that regard, and would welcome additional support from the international community in order to resolve problems of demand as well as of supply.

34. **Ms. Paterson** (New Zealand) said that the overwhelming international commitment to the optional protocols demonstrated at the Millennium Summit represented a significant advance for the rights of the child. New Zealand had been among the many signatories, and was currently working towards ratification. Political commitment from Governments was required to address the needs not only of child combatants, but of all children affected by war. Her delegation thus welcomed the initiative of the Canadian Government in convening the International Conference on War-Affected Children in Winnipeg in September 2000, which had proved most effective. The effects of armed conflict on children should be addressed by the United Nations across the full gamut of its activities. The constructive steps taken by the Security Council towards incorporating children's issues into its work were most welcome, as was the appointment of child protection advisers in United Nations peacekeeping missions in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Indeed, her delegation would welcome their inclusion in all peacekeeping operations. The role of non-governmental organizations in raising awareness of issues relating to child soldiers and in promoting the relevant optional protocol merited recognition. New Zealand, for its part, had been glad to provide support for the Asia-Pacific Conference on the Use of Children as Soldiers convened in Nepal in May and organized by the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers. It was to be hoped also that the Optional Protocol on the sale of children would prove a durable weapon against the pervasive evils of child-sex tourism, child pornography and trafficking in children.

35. It was vital to address the root causes of the exploitation of children. Poverty represented a continuing threat to the rights of the child. Her Government was currently considering the formulation of a children's policy for New Zealand's official development assistance programme, including reference to implementation of the "First Call for Children" (which would be a focus of the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly on children). ILO Convention No. 182 on the worst forms of child labour represented a further step in the protection of children's rights and New Zealand had accorded high priority to its ratification. The Convention on the Rights of the Child continued to be an essential tool for the development and review of public policy, and a benchmark against which all States' efforts in behalf of children should be measured. Her delegation would thus welcome its universal ratification. Thanks to the addition of the optional protocols, the year 2000 would be remembered as a year of new opportunities for the protection and promotion of children's rights.

36. **Ms. Hyo-eum** Jenny Kim (Republic of Korea) said that tangible advances had been made in the protection and promotion of the rights of the child in the 10 years since the Convention on the Rights of the Child had entered into force. Governments had recognized that children's rights were universal human rights and made their promotion a priority on the policy and legislation agendas. In 2000, two optional protocols had been adopted, reaffirming the strong commitment of Member States to protecting children from armed conflict, trafficking and prostitution.

37. However, the fundamental rights and freedoms of numerous children in different parts of the world continued to be violated and her delegation hoped that the General Assembly's special session on children in 2001 would provide new momentum for translating the commitments made into visible actions.

38. In reviewing the report of the Secretary-General on the status of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (A/55/201), her delegation had observed with satisfaction the efforts to systematically include a child's rights perspective in the implementation of the mandate of the agencies and programmes of the United Nations system and wished to express its appreciation of the role of non-governmental organizations and civil society in the realization of children's rights.

39. Her delegation particularly welcomed the recent efforts of the Security Council to integrate the protection of children into peacemaking and peacekeeping. All parties to armed conflicts should guarantee the protection of the rights of children, and the United Nations peacekeeping missions should help protect children and disseminate relevant information. Furthermore, Governments should not tolerate the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography,

and, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations and civil society, should also play a leading role in protecting children from all types of domestic violence in general.

40. In the light of the forthcoming special session on children, particular attention should be given to new and growing challenges such as HIV/AIDS, internally displaced children and street children; moreover, the protection of adolescents, who had been relatively ignored, should be made a priority.

41. **Ms. Soulama-Coulibaly** (Burkina Faso) said that, despite the commitments made under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the situation of numerous children remained precarious in certain parts of the world owing to poverty, diseases and armed conflict.

42. The international community had endeavoured to seek solutions to such problems. However, it was clear that, although important, the adoption of legal instruments was insufficient and a partnership between the organs of the United Nations, international organizations, Governments, non-governmental organizations and civil society was needed in order to apply them.

43. Moreover, in the context of such cooperation, it was necessary to strengthen national and local capacity for drawing up plans of action and for planning, executing and monitoring activities. Her Government had already started to prepare several plans of action with its different partners, particularly UNICEF, the Bretton Woods institutions and international cooperation agencies. Improving prison conditions for minors, the fight against female circumcision and social assistance for orphans were some of the activities carried out in collaboration with UNICEF and local non-governmental organizations.

44. Lastly, Burkina Faso had considerable expectations with regard to the follow-up to the forthcoming special session on children, where a true international partnership in the form of a plan of action should be developed.

45. **Mrs. Ceasar** (Liberia) reaffirmed the Government of Liberia's commitment to the full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the two optional protocols, and said that, as a post-conflict country with direct experience of the situation of children in armed conflict, Liberia considered that the issues covered by the protocols were central to its security and development. The Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict was important not only as a means of protecting children's rights but also as an instrument of intervention.

46. Liberia had made significant progress in implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The measures taken included harmonizing national laws with the Convention, preparing the initial country report, mainstreaming a national plan of action into the 2001-2006 National Reconstruction Programme, and making a simplified version of the Convention widely available. Moreover, a decentralized juvenile court had been established, and magistrates, judges and law-enforcement officials had received the necessary training.

47. The Government of Liberia, in collaboration with the relevant agencies of the United Nations system, had formulated policies in areas that were sensitive for women and children, and special activities and programmes had been designed for war-affected children, both child soldiers and refugee children.

48. Alleviation of the adverse social, economic and political conditions that were at the root of the conflict required concerted global efforts to mobilize technical, human and financial resources. The tendency to withhold or withdraw assistance as a conflict-resolution mechanism undermined efforts to address the causes of conflict, which included poverty, failure to respect human rights and poor governance, thereby exacerbating the sufferings of vulnerable groups, particularly women and children. The Security Council and the Economic and Social Council should be aware that the provision of technical and humanitarian assistance were critical for national capacity-building and programme execution, and any action outside that framework would adversely affect Liberia's ability to advance planned activities.

49. **Ms. Uluiviti** (Fiji) said that her delegation echoed the previously registered concerns regarding the absence of the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, in view of the nuances contained in her report (A/55/297).

50. The report on Fiji belied the status of the protection of children in a context of competing demands for human-rights observance and a demonstrably small developing economy. It was

necessary to set the record straight. Fiji was committed to the well-being of its children and had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1993; that had entailed the establishment of the national monitoring mechanism, the Coordinating Committee on Children, which functioned without an office or a budget. The Committee operated through its subcommittees, which was an innovative model, at least in the Asia-Pacific region. Despite constraints, the Committee had submitted its initial report under the Convention in 1995.

51. Although matters were not perfect, it was positive to look at internal developments, in order to establish realistic objectives regarding the minimum standards to be observed.

52. Having assisted in the Special Rapporteur's mission to Fiji as representative of the Fiji Law Reform Commission, which had offered all necessary facilities to the mission, she regretted that the undertaking to allow the Commission to preview the summary of the report on Fiji in order to provide factual and editorial clarifications, had not materialized. Consequently, the Government had been placed in a difficult position when the Special Rapporteur's preliminary findings had been published without prior notification. Such missions should be conducted with great sensitivity and respect for State sovereignty in order to avoid the public and political discussion that marred the special mission to Fiji in July 1999. Nevertheless, the report had presented interesting points that should be followed up.

53. Fiji had been chosen as a model country in the Pacific region, owing to its geographical position and not because of rampant child trafficking or pornography, and it was confident that, in the search for creative methodologies and solutions to critical concerns, such special-rapporteur mechanisms would be respectful of the sovereignty of Member States. To balance the report, the summary of the visit to Fiji presented to the Commission on Human Rights had given a reasonable picture of the situation, although considerably more was being done in the legal, political and social spheres than had been indicated.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.